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*Description of the Great Śiva Temple of Gangai Kondapuram and of some other places in the Trichinopoly District.—*

*By* LIEUT.-COL. B. R. BRANFILL. (With a Plate.)

During the past season I visited and examined the great Śiva temple of Gangaikonda (-Shola-)puram (Gangacondapuram of A. S. 79), situate in the extreme E. N. E. part of the Trichinopoly District, 20 miles S. W. from Chidambaram.

As this is the largest\* and best specimen of a South Indian temple proper I have ever met with, I venture to offer a short description of it. Roughly speaking it is a facsimile of the great Tanjore Temple, possibly its prototype, or perhaps more probably a copy; but never having been “restored,” as the Tanjore example has, and being built throughout in a very hard kind of stone, it retains much of its pristine appearance and purity of design, which has been lost there.

I made notes of my observations on the spot and took measurements, sketches and some impressions of the inscriptions with which its base is covered, as specimens of the character, which is mostly old Tamil, very similar to that at Tanjore.

Gangaikondapuram is the site of a deserted town supposed to have been the city or chief town of Gangaikonda Chóla.

\* The largest Indian sanctuary towers mentioned by Fergusson (Hist. of Arch. Vol. III.) are those of Jaganáth at Puri and the great Tanjore Pagoda, which are 80 and 82 feet square at base respectively.

Most of the inscriptions appeared to be mere statements of gifts made to the temple by private persons. The western and southern (side) inscriptions appeared to be mostly in the Tamil character and language with occasional Sanskrit formulæ to begin and end with. Those on the northern side were said to be chiefly in Grantha and Telugu or other (than Tamil) characters.

The temple consists of a grand stone "stubi" (as they called it), a sanctuary *steeple* or *Vimānam* on a raised basement or terrace, decorated by a rail ornament below, having the upright posts engraved with griffins (or *Yāli*), and an elaborate scroll-enveloped animal or figure on every third or fourth post, but no cross-bars or horizontal rails between.

The *Alōḍai* or terrace-path is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, surrounding the entire temple, including the great Veli-mandapam or Outer court, at a height of about 5 feet above the (original) ground level.

The great pyramidal *Vimāna* is 100 feet square\* at base and about 165 feet high. The double story below the pyramid and immediately above the terrace basement is vertical, with five compartments or towers on each face (north, west and south) of the temple, separated by four deep recesses, with a handsome sculptured ornament (*purāna kumbam*) in each recess. Each projecting compartment has a fine sculptured figure, chiefly Śaiva but not without important Vaiṣṇava figures, and the plain intervals of flat wall are covered with (?) historical scenes of rishis, kings, worshippers and attendants, celestial as well as terrestrial, in low relief.

Above the double vertical story rises the pyramidal *stubi* in seven stories to the neck which is spacious and supports four bulls (as at Tanjore) below the dome or semi-dome.

The whole temple is of stone throughout, and the domed top is apparently carved to represent a copper tile or leaf-pattern covering, like that of the five halls (*sabha*) at Chidambaram.

The only or chief ornament of the pyramidal portion of the tower is the square and oblong cells of "Rath" (= car) or *Gōpuram* (= spire-roofed) pattern, with their elaborate fan-shaped windows, like spread peacocks' tails.

There is little if any stucco to be seen, the whole being of pure stone.

On the east side and attached to the great *stubi* is the *Mēle-Mandapam* (= a high court or west court), a three-storied portico or transept covering the cross aisle between the north and south entrances to the Temple; this is built to match the *Vimāna*, as at Tanjore.

To its east again and attached to it, is the west wall and end of the great Outer court (Veli-mandapam), begun in the same magnificent scale

\* See note above.

and style, but never completed : for it is broken down or left off rather abruptly, and finished by a plain large hall, completely enclosed by its four walls and flat roof, only half the height originally designed.

It measures 80 feet wide, North and South, and 163 feet long, West to East, with a plain doorway in the middle of the east end, having huge stone warders (*dwárapál*), but otherwise devoid of any fine ornamentation. It is 18 or 20 feet in height, and the roof is supported by four rows of plain stone pillars.

There is a large uncovered and incomplete portico in front (East) of the Veli-mandapam, approached by a double flight of steps from North and South and 10 or 12 feet above ground level, which is the level of the interior of the mandap and temple.

The court-yard of the temple is about 610 feet East and West, by 350 feet North and South, with a fine gópuram or entrance tower built entirely of stone (fast falling down) on the East, of grand but suitable proportions, not half the height of the temple itself. Usually the gópuram is 8 or 10 times as high as the temple sanctuary.

The court-yard or quadrangle was once surrounded by a double-storied open cloister of plain but solid stone work, said to have contained 365 cells (in the two stories), but only a few of these remain in the centre of the north wall there is a small plain doorway.

The surrounding wall was of stone and must have been about 25 feet high.

The sculptures round the base of the temple are very good in design and execution.

The architecture struck me as grand, simple and pure, with many traces of the wooden construction of which it is, in many respects, a copy ; especially in the projecting beam-heads at the angles, each of which is surmounted by a rude lump roughly resembling a flattened spiral (conch-) shell, perhaps intended for the *sálagrám* (black ammonite or serpent-stone) ; only this is a Śaiva temple.

I did not notice the *Nága*, but saw traces of trees with umbrellas over them.

The (proper) right hand *Dwárapál* has the right foot raised and resting on a stump (of a tree), encircled by a serpent with a half-swallowed elephant in its mouth, at all three doorways alike.

The projecting stone cornice of single convex flexure is massive, but does not stand out so far as in many more modern cases I have noticed elsewhere, but is, I should say, more free and prominent than some to be seen at Chidambaran.

I did not see the imitation of wooden rafters and laths, with nail heads &c., to be seen at Tinnevely.

The usual Bull (*Nandi*) in front of the temple is a poor one, compared with that at Tanjore.

The minor temples and shrines in the court-yard are inferior and mostly in ruins.

One of the more conspicuous of the sculptures represents Śiva coming out of an opening (*yóni* or split) in a cylindrical stone column (or *lingam*).

This figure is represented at Tanjore and elsewhere, and is to be seen repeated here several times in various parts of the Gangaikonda Sholapuram temples.

A figure of a rishi (*Mārkaṇḍa*) on his knees, with forehead on the ground, is below.

The pillars and pilasters are very plain, square in the four towers (or *rath*-like portions), forming the four corners of the *stūbi*, ornamented by pointed leaves below the capitals, which are very fine large tabular slabs.

The square pillars or pilasters are not cut away to the octagon form leaving square blocks, as is common. The pillars and pilasters of the next, intermediate, partitions or towers are octagon throughout, with similar lanceolate ornamentation and (octagonal) capitals.

The central partitions or towers have 16-gonal pillars and pilasters with similar ornaments and capitals.

The plinth moulding is very grand, bold and chaste. It recalled to my mind the pattern of the plinth moulding of an unfinished temple at Kuttalam (*Courtallam*) in Tinnevely.

The flat portions of the walls are covered with (?) historical scenes in which rishis and country folk, herdsmen &c., figure largely.

There are three or four wells in the Temple court, one of which (the *Sin(g)ha Tīrtham*) is connected with the legend of the founding of the temple and possesses a never-failing supply of very good water.

I noticed that the name on the Tamil inscriptions was Gangaikonda Sholapuram and Gangaikondapuram. The inhabitants now call it Gangaikandapuram. They told me that the Stalapurāna or local historical record of Gangaikondapuram had been taken to Tanjore and a copy placed in the Rajah's library there, whilst a copy (or the original) was taken and kept by the copyist who now resides at Nachaiyārkóvil (or at Tirichirai) near Kumbakónam.

Another place of interest I visited may be worth mentioning though quite modern, and that is Rámalinga-pillai-sálai, a remarkable church or college building, called variously *Pardésimaḍam*, and *Sanmārga-Sabai*, situate on the high road from "Cuddalore" to Vriddhāchalam, a mile or



so west of the point where the high road from Madras (viâ Panrutti) to Kumbakónam crosses it.

A few years since, one Rámalingapillai collected followers and money and attempted to establish a new religion. He appears to have taught the ethics of Christianity without its theology. But I could not get at any precise particulars. Having collected some hundreds of followers (2000 was stated) and built his college, Rámalingapillai retired with some ceremony into concealment in a house, now styled "*Tirumáligai*," in the village of Moṭṭukuppam, a few miles distant from the College.

He is said, by his followers who now await his re-appearance at "the last day," to have never come forth from the room in which he disappeared, or to have been seen again.

I think the true facts of the case are worth eliciting and putting on record. The building is a remarkable one of brick and *chunam* in the modern Eurasian composite style, and the domed part of the roof or cupola appears to be covered with sheet metal.

I also visited Chenji or Sanji-Kóṭṭai (Anglice *Gingee*), a remarkable precipitous bluff rock, covered with and surrounded by fortifications of no very ancient date apparently. It is just the kind of stronghold that was likely to be seized on and held as a citadel by the successive conquering armies that have overrun the Carnátik for some centuries past.

The most interesting thing I observed here, beside the natural fastness (a notice of which is to be found in the *South Arcot Gazetteer*), was a very rudely carved stone lying in front of a small shrine halfway up the rock on the south side, dedicated to a local goddess called Kamala-kanni-y-amman to whom human sacrifices were formerly offered. Plate I shows copy of a rough pencil sketch taken hurriedly on the spot. Four human heads occupy a square raised shield, with two parallel bars in the centre like a pair of dumbbells with small knobs, which might stand for footprints. Each pair of heads is separated by a *triṣul*-like mark immediately above and below the pair of bars in the centre. Above these in the centre at top is a pair of ram's (?) horns, surmounted by a short transverse bar and appendage which I could not make out, and in the centre below, a corresponding pair of buffalo (? *kulgá*), horns and head. A bow to the right and five arrows to the left on the lower part of the stone, at each side of the raised part, complete the carving. The arrows are club-headed and feathered, and one of them is furnished with a hole at one end, as if to hold a line. The entire stone is an oblate circle about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, and not very thick, lying flat on the ground. Close to it is an upright figure of "*Minudaiyan Vírappan*," with hands together in the attitude of respect or supplication, and a sacrificial post stood near.

The *grām-munsif* said that this “kóvil” or chapel was held in great respect by the country-folk and was originally there before the present fortifications were built. Sacrifices are still made in times of drought and dearth and are supposed to be very efficacious.

The temples at the base of Chenji and some of the sculptures and remains are very interesting, extensive and well wrought, but apparently modern, though quite deserted and going to ruin. The monkey god Hanumán is to be seen in several places sculptured on the rocks.

Since the road was made which passes through part of the Chenji fortress, it has been frequently visited and despoiled of its sculptured treasures. I was informed that the fine columns which adorn the “Place” at Pondicherry were removed hence by stealth, by an enterprising Frenchman. But we need not grudge them, for they are appreciated highly where they are, instead of being neglected and lost sight of in the spot where they formerly lay.

Some very handsome sculptures have been removed and set up at Chittámúr, a few miles distant to the eastward, near a new temple built by a neighbouring chief.

The traditional founder of the fortress is said to be one Supálaka (or perhaps rather *Tupálaka*) Náyak.

I may here mention that the Stalapurána of Senji-Kóttai was stated to have been taken away by the Collector of the District (S. Arcot), a few years ago, and never returned.

At Mailam (= *Mayúrastalam*) near Tindivanam, the Tamburán (or abbot) informed me that his temple was founded by King Jayamba or Jayambaga Mahárája, from the north, who also founded or built Senji-Kóttai. This old fellow is a very fine specimen of a man who never touches flesh or any cooked food, but lives on fruit and milk only. He has repaired and restored his temple and is now building a fine stone gópuram on which I was shown a sculpture of himself in the style of an old bearded Rishi. He reminded me of the Tamburán (or abbot) of Tiru(p)pan-andál near Kumbakónam.

Another very interesting place I visited near Tindivanam is Perumukkal (“*Permacoil*” of Orme and of the Indian Atlas, sheet No. 78). Perumukkal is the common pronunciation in the district. At the place itself it is called, and written also, Perumukkúl.

Like Senji-Kóttai it has been a fortified stronghold for some centuries. It has a fine large stone mandap on the summit and some small temples or shrines, but the ruins of some larger ones strew the summit, sides and base.

The rock is an isolated one of dark granitic boulders, very precipitous in most places. It is the last to the S. S. Eastward of the rocky masses that stud the plain of the Karnatik to the south-west of Madras.

I noticed stone circles at its eastern base, as well as at other stony places to the west and south-west, on both banks of the Ponníyár (S. Pennár or Pinákini.)

Mr. Garstin in the S. Arcot District Manual gives Peru-múkal (=great travail), from a legend of Sítadévi having here given birth to twins. There are two villages near, called Nalmukkúl (or Nanmukkúl) and Palamukkúl, names having reference to the same legend. Mr. Garstin also mentions Jánikipéttai, and I may add Rámanáthapuram, all in the immediate vicinity. But the old Samiyási or hermit sent for the stalapurána (kept by an artizan in the neighbourhood) and wished to show me from it that the proper name of the hill is Mukkiyáçalam, and that it is therein styled Madbyakási (Middle Kasi) and is the scene of Rishi Válmuiki's penance, death and burial. A ruined shrine attached to the mandap is pointed out as the spot where he was interred.

There are the remains of many fine sculptures here, destroyed by the Muslím, and many inscriptions on the base of the temples.

The fort was held and besieged repeatedly in the wars of the Karnátik in which much damage was done by the roundshot.

The following observation may be worthy of record.

At Gangaikondapuram the wells are said to have a perennial supply of good water near the surface, that fails not in the driest seasons; and at Chidambaram the same is said of the great tank in the temple enclosure. At Tiruvaði (A. S. 79), close to Panrutti, I noticed in the bed of the Geðilam or Garuðanadi (the "*Cuddalore*" river) a natural spring or fountain of clear water, welling up with some violence in the midst of the muddy river-water. It is said to be perennial and to be as good as Kávéri water, whence it is locally called *Kollaðattumólai* = *Kolladam* or "water-spring".

In connection with these I may mention the artesian wells that have recently been opened at Pondicherry and suggest that the perennial supply at Gangaikondapuram, Chidambaram and Tiruvaði may be explained by there being at those places a connection with the water-bearing stratum which is the source of the artesian wells, underlying the extensive laterite beds of the *Cuddalore* or S. Arcot district. I have heard of other places, particularly near Villapuram on the South Indian Railway, where the subjacent springs have been tapped by the natives and the outflowing water long since utilized for irrigating their fields.

*Rude Megalithic Monuments in North Arcot.*—  
By LIEUT.-COLONEL R. B. BRANFILL. (With a Plate.)

I have just had an opportunity of visiting the disused *tomb-field* at Iralabanda Bâpanattam, in the Palmanér taluk of North Arcot.

The tombs here are of unusual interest from the size, shape and arrangement of the slabs of which they are composed, and the rarity of their chief characteristic.

The usual kistvaen or megalithic sepulchral cell is enclosed by three concentric rings of upright stone slabs, each slab having its top rudely worked (chipped or hammer-dressed) into a semicircular or a rectangular shape, and set closely side by side alternately, the round-heads standing higher than the intermediate flat-heads by the amount of their semi-diameter, *i. e.*, the height of the rounded portion, so as to form a parapeted wall of rounded *merlons* with flat silled *embrasures*.

These walls or parapets rise in three concentric tiers on a slight mound or cairn, a foot or so above the general ground level.

The outer circle or tier consists of some 24 slabs, nearly 3 feet wide, half of them being semicircular at top and standing about 3 feet high, the whole forming a ring fence or enclosing wall about 30 feet in diameter.

The second tier has 16 slabs, 8 of them round-headed, rising to a height of 5 or 6 feet above the cairn or mound; the whole forming an intermediate ring-wall about 22 feet in diameter.

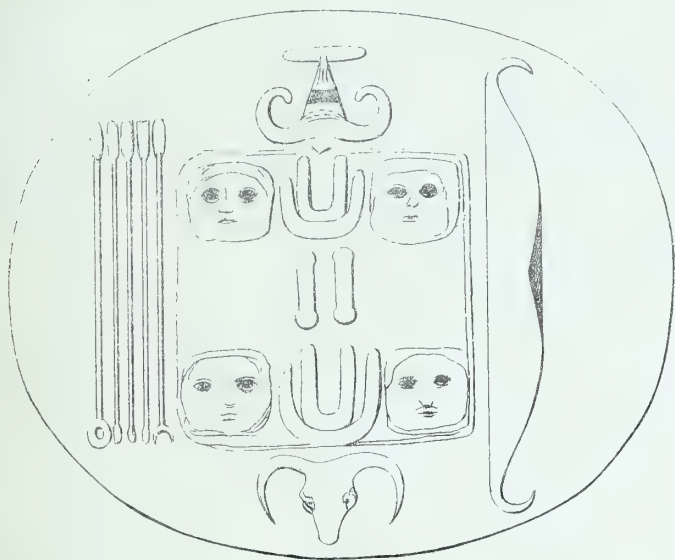
The third or inner wall is composed of four prominent round-topped slabs, 8 to 10 feet wide, and 12 or 15 feet high above the cairn, and 4 or 5 feet higher than the other four flat-headed slabs that stand between them and complete the inner ring, an octagon of some 16 feet in diameter, or rather a square of 12 to 15 feet, with the corners cut off.

The kistvaen or sepulchral chamber nearly fills up the internal space, the capstone or covering slab of which sometimes projects horizontally beyond the chamber below it, so as to fit closely to the four great round-headed slabs that enclose it, the 4 flat-headed corner stones being only about the same height as the capstone, and narrower than the others.

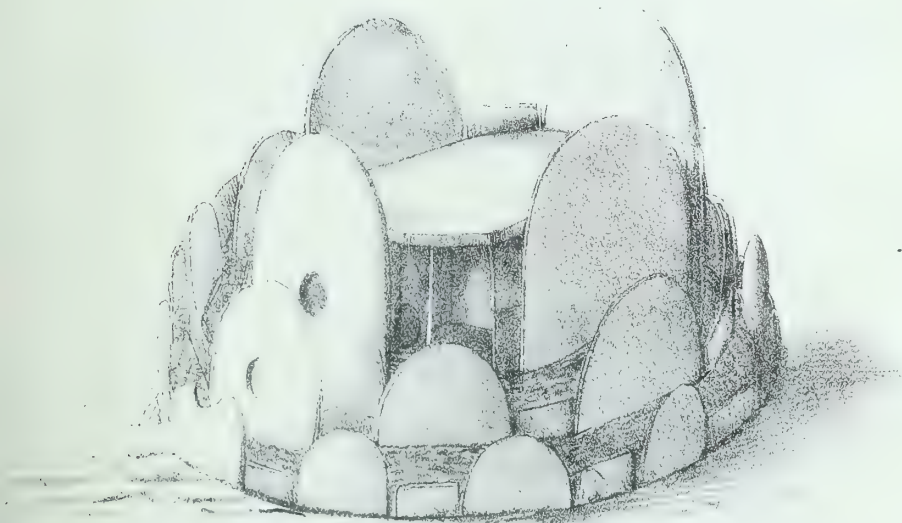
The only entrance to the interior was apparently intended to be solely by small holes broken in the two or three central slabs on the east front, and nearly opposite to the similar hole in the eastern wall-slab of the kist. There is a kind of antechamber or closed portico between the inner chamber and the inner enclosing wall, provided with a moveable shutter stone or slab.

The stone slabs used throughout are comparatively very thin, being usually about 3 inches thick, and even the great capstones seldom exceed 6 inches.





Rudely sculptured (sacrificial) stone, lying before Temple of Kamala-kanni-yamma at Chergji or Sanji-kólláé ("Gingee") S. Arcot.



Rude sepulchral monument of stone slabs at Iratabanda—Bipanattam, in North Arcot District of Madras. Restored slightly.

The whole forms an imposing structure, and recalls the idea of a small citadel or fortification.

There are many examples, perhaps a score or more of this pattern, still partly standing, and about as many more of a very similar kind, only without the round-headed projections, all the slabs in each ring or tier being of the same height, about 7 feet above ground level, and completely hiding the enclosed kistvaen.

Dividing the tombs into three classes according to size, and counting the fallen and half buried, as well as those standing, there are 170 of the 1st or biggest, 210 of the 2nd, and 200 of the 3rd or smallest sort, a simple kist composed of slabs from 2 feet square and upwards, more or less buried in the earth, and without any enclosing walls or circle of stones remaining.

Most of the tombs in this *nekropolis* are much ruined and overgrown by jungle so that I suppose there may well have been many more than 600 tombs here, within a space 500 yards long and 300 wide. The interments have but a shallow covering of soil, sometimes less than one foot.

On excavating they were found to yield the usual sepulchral relics, except that iron weapons were very scarce or entirely absent, whilst the terracotta coffers were more abundant than in the similar tombs of Mysore. In one, a few ornamental beads, similar to some taken out of the Coorg tombs, were found lying near the remains of a human skull.

Some of the coffers, sepulchral troughs or trays, were ornamented with a chain ornament in festoons and furnished with projecting rings or loops and prominent hooks, as if to hang garlands on. Some were mere small flat oval troughs, whilst others ranged up to 4 feet long, 2 feet wide and high, and were furnished with four or five pairs of legs

Perhaps however I need only further mention the chief novelty that struck me, and this may be no novelty to others.

Two or three Tamil letters were found scratched on a fragment of a little bowl. They seem to spell the words *saduma* or *chathum* or *chadud*; the final letter (? *m*) is very doubtful and may be intended for a terminal *d* or *t*, if that were admissible.

I have some rough notes and sketches of a few of the monuments, but had no leisure to explore further. A careful collection and close scrutiny of every fragment of the pottery (which is abundant and of the rude but antique and polished kind) would probably yield some valuable and curious information as to the habits, &c. of the tomb builders.

The locality has a bad character for being feverish and is in a very retired part of the country just above the Eastern Ghats.

The way to it lies through Chittúr and Palmanéri whence there is a good road for 15 miles to the S. W. to Baireddipalle, and thence a bridle path for 6 miles *viâ* Neilipatla to Bápanattam. The nearest name marked

on the old Indian Atlas, Sheet No. 78, is “Yerlabundah” (? Irala-rock). The Irala are the wild folk who roam the jungle in search of forest products and a free silvan life. During the rainy season some of them are said to dwell in these tombs, many of which would afford them perfect dwelling-houses, and the marks and relics of their recent occupation are to be seen frequently and unmistakeably.

I know of but three or four other places where these peculiar rounded slabs are to be seen, but they will probably be found to be more common when looked for.

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*The Coins of the Mahārājahs of Kángra.*—By C. J. RODGERS.

(With a plate.)

Kángra is the name of a fort and town situated at the junction of two mountain streams which form a tributary of the Bías on its right bank ere it leaves the hills. The coins in the accompanying Plate II go by the name of Kángra coins now-a-days. Bnt the rájahs whose coins they are were known in history by the name of the Rájahs of Trigartta, the country of the three rivers, the Ráví, Bías and Sutlej. The family of these Rájahs claims its descent from Susarma Chandra, governor of Multán at the time of the Mahábhá-rata. After the war was over they went to the hills for refuge and erected the fort of Kángra for their protection. The district under the Rájahs of Kángra seems to have been like all districts governed by such Rájahs in old unsettled times. Kángra was their mountain stronghold. The neighbouring district of Jalandhar was subject to them, and must have furnished a considerable portion of their revenue. So the Rájahs of Kángra would be known at that time as Rájahs of Jalandhar. Being of the lunar race they kept the title *Chandra* after their names.

The Indo-Scythians conquered the fort of Kángra. When Mahmúd conquered it “the genealogical roll of the Indo-Scythian princes of Kabul for sixty generations was found in the fortress of Nagarkot by Mahmúd’s soldiers”\* (Kángra is known in the history of India by the name of *Nagarkot*). From this fact, and from the immense amount of wealth taken from Kángra by Mahmúd, General Cunningham infers that “Káng-ra must have belonged to the Rájahs of Kabul for several generations, and

\* General Cunningham’s Archæological Report, Vol. V, for 1872-3, p. 155. The General quotes Abu Rihán’s statement as contained in Al Biruni. I may here state that I am indebted to this report for nearly all my facts concerning the Mahārājahs of Kángra and to General Cunningham for much valuable aid generously given when I began to collect the coins drawn in the plate.

that it was their chief stronghold in which they deposited their treasures.”\* Not only this, but General Cunningham thinks that the wealth accumulated in Kángra at that time consisted of the silver pieces of the Hindu Rájahs of Kabul which are even now found so plentifully throughout the Panjáb—the coins of Samanta Deva, Syalapati Deva, Bhím Deva and Khadavaya Deva.†

One fact bearing strongly on this view the General seems to have overlooked. All the coins of the Kángra Rájahs with some few rare exceptions are of the horseman type. Some are of the bull and horseman type with the names of the Rájahs over the bulls. Nay more than this, the earliest Kángra coins bear the name of Samanta Deva over the bull. That they were coined in Kángra no one will doubt who will cast his eye over the coins of the Rájahs in the plate. I once attributed the first two coins to Susarma Chandra. But a careful examination of the letters together with the results of a comparison of the letters of other coins with these, has convinced me that they are the coins of Samanta Deva.

The list of names of the Rájahs of Kángra from Susarma Chandra down to the last Rájahs is of course obtainable. There is no reason for doubting its correctness. But as yet no coins have been found going further back than Prithví or Píthama to whom General Cunningham assigns the year 1330 A. D. This is an approximation only, but based on fair reasoning. Judging by the number of coins obtainable of any prince we may I think fairly infer the length of his reign. The fewness of the coins argues that the reign was short. Before Píthama I believe the coins of Samanta Deva were coined and used at Kángra. There are immense numbers of these coins found yearly in the Panjáb. Some of them have the horseman after the usual type, horse well shown and the whole body of the rider with letters on either side his head. The bull is well developed too and the name above it is generally legible. But the Kángra type of Samanta Deva, which the die-cutters of the mints of the Rájahs of Kángra seem to have slavishly adhered to, is unmistakeable, after it is once studied and known. The other well drawn coins are probably those of the Kabul or some other mint.

We must not be surprised if the coins of all the Rájahs are not obtainable. The coins of Kashmír, though very abundant, have many kings unrepresented. The coins of Chumba a neighbouring state to Kángra bear only the names of a few Rájahs, although the list of kings numbers no less than 170 sovereigns. Coining seems to have always been considered the peculiar privilege of paramount sovereigns or of independent rulers. Bearing this in mind, we need not wonder if any hiatus occurs in the lists of

\* *Ibid.*, p. 156.

† I have seen several hundreds of these coins this year.—C. J. R.